

AO 91 (Rev. 02/09) Criminal Complaint

**United States District Court
for the
Western District of New York**

United States of America

Case No. 24-MJ-1116

v.

PHLYCIA HUNT

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Theft of Government Money)

Between on or about March 29, 2024 and on or about April 09, 2024, in the County of Erie, in the Western District of New York, the defendant, PHLYCIA HUNT, willfully and knowingly did convert to her use \$1,200 United States currency, which was property of the United States, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641.

This Criminal Complaint is based on these facts:

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Jaclyn M. Coyne

Complainant's signature

JACLYN M. COYNE

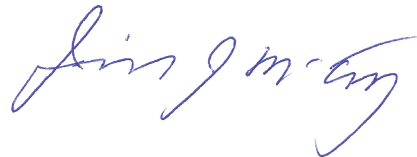
SPECIAL AGENT

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Printed name and title

Sworn to and signed telephonically.

Date: April 24, 2024



Judge's signature

City and State: Buffalo, New York

HONORABLE JEREMIAH J. MCCARTHY
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Printed name and title

STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF ERIE
CITY OF BUFFALO

JACLYN M. COYNE, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

INTRODUCTION AND AGENT BACKGROUND

1. I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI) and have been so employed since 2016. I am currently assigned to the FBI Field Office in Buffalo, New York. Accordingly, I am an investigative or law enforcement officer of the United States within the meaning of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2510(7) in that I am empowered by law to conduct investigations of and to make arrests for offenses enumerated in Title 18 and Title 21. As an FBI Special Agent, I have participated in investigations of various federal offenses, including public corruption, civil rights, wire fraud, narcotics violations, and others. During the course of my career, I have received training and gained experience in interview and interrogation techniques, arrest procedures, search warrant applications, the execution of searches and seizures and various criminal laws and procedures. During my time as a Special Agent of the FBI, I have conducted or participated in surveillances, the use of cooperating witnesses, execution of arrest and search warrants, debriefing of informants, and reviews of taped conversations. Through my training, education, and experience, I have become familiar with the manner in which various federal offenses can be committed. In addition, I have been the affiant on federal arrest warrant applications and search warrant applications. My training and experience as an FBI Special Agent and my conversations with other law enforcement officials familiar with white collar criminal violations from the basis of my conclusions set forth below, which I draw from the

facts set forth herein.

II. INVESTIGATION BACKGROUND

2. PHYLICIA HUNT is a witness in an ongoing federal investigation regarding public corruption, bribery, drug trafficking, sex trafficking, and witness tampering. To date, the investigation has resulted in several indictments, including a pending Second Superseding Indictment in Case No. 19-CR-227- LJV, which charges *inter alia*, Peter Gerace Jr. (“Gerace”), with violations of federal law consisting of: conspiracy to defraud the United States, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371 (Count 2), bribing a public official, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(C) (Count 6), maintaining a drug-involved premises, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 856(a)(1) and 18 U.S.C. § 2 (Count 7), conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846 (Count 8), and conspiracy to commit sex trafficking, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1594(c) (Count 9). See Case No. 19-CR-227, Dkt. No. 89. 3. As set forth in the above-referenced Second Superseding Indictment, the investigation and charges include, among other things: drug and sex trafficking activities that have occurred in and around Pharaohs Gentlemen’s Club.

3. On May 4, 2023, HUNT was arrested by the FBI in the Western District New York for possession of small amounts of certain controlled substances, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 844(a) and attempted possession of a controlled substance, in violation of Title 21 United States Code, Section 846.

4. After HUNT’s arrest, HUNT successfully completed a rehabilitation program and continued to provide pertinent information related to the ongoing investigation mentioned above. The investigation has involved threats against various federal witnesses,

including HUNT. As such, the federal government made arrangements for HUNT to have safe and secure housing upon her release from an inpatient rehabilitation facility.

5. Starting in December 2023, the federal government provided government funds of \$1,200.00 United States currency on a monthly basis for the express purpose of paying rent at a safe, privately-owned location known to the FBI (hereinafter “the Premises”). For rent payments covering tenancy in the months of December 2023, January 2024, and February 2024, the government funds were provided to HUNT’s relative, a person known to the FBI, who used the funds to pay the rent for the Premises and who provided the government with a receipt signed by the landlord for the Premises. In February 2024¹, Special Agents provided the government funds directly to HUNT and explained to HUNT that the money was being provided to her for the express purpose of paying her March 2024 rent at the Premises. Special Agents further explained to HUNT that she would be required to provide law enforcement with a receipt from the landlord of the Premises establishing that HUNT had used the government funds to pay her rent. HUNT appropriately used the government funds provided to HUNT to pay her rent for March 2024 and provided the government with a receipt for that payment.

6. On March 29, 2024, federal agents met with HUNT and provided her \$1,200.00 of government funds to use for her April 2024 rent payment. During this meeting, HUNT signed a Receipt for Cash-Subvoucher, a document establishing that she took possession of the \$1,200 of government funds, and which specified that the funds were provided for a “rental payment.”

¹ On February 27, 2024, HUNT’s criminal complaint pending under Magistrate No. 23-mj-01033 was dismissed pursuant to Rule 48(a).

7. On April 9, 2024, HUNT sent a text message to a federal agent that contained an image of a rental payment receipt, bearing HUNT's signature and the landlord's signature, implying that she used the government funds for April 2024 rent.

8. On April 18, 2024, federal agents interviewed A.K., HUNT's landlord, and owner of the Premises. A.K. stated that HUNT was a tenant at his property. A.K. stated he did not receive the \$1,200.00 rent payment from HUNT for April 2024. A.K. stated that HUNT told A.K. that she needed a receipt from A.K. that claimed she paid the full rent amount for April 2024 because she was a witness in a trial and needed to show attorneys the rent payment receipt. A.K. therefore provided HUNT with a receipt that stated she paid rent in full when she in fact did not. HUNT did not provide the \$1,200 of government funds that she took possession of on March 29, 2024 to A.K., which was the express purpose that the government funds were provided to her.

III. CONCLUSION

9. Between on or about March 29, 2024 and on or about April 9, 2024, in the County of Erie, in the Western District of New York, the defendant, PHLYCIA HUNT, willfully and knowingly converted for her use \$1,200.00 United States currency, which was property of the United States, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641.

10. For the reasons set forth herein, I submit that there is probable cause to believe, and I do believe, that PHYLICIA HUNT has committed the offense of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641, Theft of Government Money, Property, or Records. I respectfully request the issuance of the requested criminal complaint and arrest warrant.

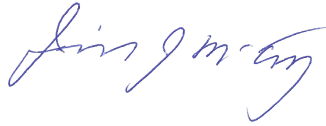
16. I also request that this affidavit, the requested criminal complaint and the

requested warrant, be placed under seal by the Court until the time of the initial appearance in order to ensure the safety and well-being of law enforcement officers and to prevent HUNT from fleeing before arrest.

Jaclyn M. Coyne

Jaclyn M. Coyne
FBI Special Agent

Sworn to and subscribed telephonically on this 24 day of April 2024.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeremiah J. McCarthy", is written over a horizontal line.

HON. JEREMIAH J. MCCARTHY
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE